

# THE TARGET

## THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH DAKOTA SHOOTING SPORTS ASSOCIATION

Volume 20, Number 4

ISSN: 1086-4172

October, November, December 2013

### Do you want to be a match director?

Over the past 30 years or so, I have acted as match director for handgun silhouette, bullseye pistol, light rifle, air rifle, air pistol, smallbore rifle, and even muzzleloading rifle and pistol matches. These matches have been run under the authority of the National Rifle Association, international handgun metallic silhouette Association, USA shooting, 4-H shooting sports and the national muzzleloading organizations.

For those of you who have only a vague idea about what a match director actually does, I'm going to cover some of the main duties that a match director is expected to accomplish. They are often quite challenging.

First of all, the match director must contact the governing body for the match and secure authority to schedule and run the match within that governing body's authority. That means that the match director is expected to know the rules and how to contact the governing body for authority and also to report the results. This initial activity should be accomplished anywhere from 30 days to 180 days prior to the actual match date.

Once the match is authorized, the match director must advertise the match to those shooters who might like to attend. When I first started doing this, that advertising was accomplished primarily by mail and word-of-mouth. Occasionally, the national governing body would publicize the match in a newsletter or one of their magazines, if we plan ahead long enough and far enough to meet their publication deadlines. Today, we normally advertise a match by e-mail as well as through the governing body's publications and within this newsletter that you're reading.

Then, the match director has to make sure that the proper targets, target frames and shooting venue are available. Most often, the match director will have to negotiate with the owner or manager of the facility where the match will take place. The match director then has to survey that facility to make sure that it will accommodate the match properly and safely. Most often, that will require that the match director performs some modification or preparation at the match facility. Sometimes, that modification of the facility might involve a great deal of work by a large number of people or more often a great deal of work by a very few people one of whom is likely the match director. When I think about a lot of work, the best current example is probably Coby and those who helped him work to expand the David Disrud family/Bruce Alexander range west of Rolla, North Dakota. Those of you who haven't been there to see the results of that effort should really take a trip up there and have Coby give you a tour of the process.

Our Lake Region Shooting Sports Association hosted an air rifle and air pistol match on Sunday, December 15, 2013 for what turned out to include 40 air rifle shooters and 11 air pistol shooters. In order to successfully run that match, I along with José Figueroa, Jeff and Jacob Vaagen spent a little over 2 1/2 hours on Friday after supper to set up the range with 16 firing points and the gathering area with tables and chairs etc. My wife Connie put together targets with the Orion system barcodes for those shooters who had preregistered for the match by telephone and e-mail over the past 30 to 45 days. On the morning of the match and over the evening the day before, Connie and I packed the Orion system, the assembled targets, etc. and of course delivered them to the range where we set up the Orion system to operate the match. Those of you who attended the match know that Connie also baked some cookies for the shooters to enjoy, and we of course had to pack those and bring them to the match as well. Almost all of them disappeared at the match, so we didn't have to carry them back home. One of our competitor's families added a pan of rice crispy bars to Connie's cookies, and they were also well received by all. I even ate some.

After the match, José, Connie and I with help from a couple of our match competitors took down the target frames, tables and chairs to put the facility back into the shape it was in previous to our match. From the time that we arrived at the range on Sunday morning until we left the range involved about 9 1/2 hours or maybe a bit more.

That evening we began work on the match report which the match director is responsible to send to each of the participants as well as, in this case, the NRA competitions department.

What I've outlined above is simply a summary and leaves out many of the details that a match director will have to deal with such as match scoring technicalities, unforeseen failure of equipment during the match as well as making sure that there's enough toilet paper in the bathroom. You can see that there is a lot of opportunity to forget something, and you can also see that a match director isn't going to get all this done by himself.

So, if you want to be a match director, I'm sure that one of our existing match directors would be happy to have you work with him to run a few matches and get used to the process.

(Continued on page 4)

**Match Director** (continued from page 1)

On the other hand, if you simply want to support your current match director, just volunteer and show up to help with whatever needs to be accomplished. Any help that you can provide will be greatly appreciated by not only the match director but also the shooters who take part in our matches.

The job of the match director is not a scheduled activity. It takes as long as it takes and often involves work far longer than what many consider to be a standard eight hour day. The match director is paid by the knowledge that the shooters were provided a fair and safe environment in which to compete and improve their skills. Over the course of the last 30 years, I've had the pleasure of seeing many of those who have competed in the matches that I've directed achieve substantial improvement and even occasionally mastery of the marksmanship skills. A few have even set State and National records. Some have gained scholarships to attend college and compete in college shooting programs. Almost all of those who have taken up this sport of competitive shooting at a young age have developed into responsible, productive, self-reliant adults.

In the end, a shooting sports match director is a volunteer dedicated to providing a fair and safe competitive environment for shooters to refine their marksmanship skills. One nice thing about being a match director is that we rarely get yelled at like referees at football, basketball and hockey games. Our rewards are the accomplishments of the match competitors and often their mere attendance at the match is substantial reward in itself. In other words get out your firearm and ammunition and attend a shooting match. You will most likely enjoy yourself and your attendance will reward the match director's efforts on your behalf.

Again, our shooting sports athletes in North Dakota have been well served by our North Dakota match directors over the last 30 years, and I certainly hope that some of you who read this will get involved to perpetuate our efforts for years into the future. Providing someone with an opportunity to shoot tens and x's is almost as much fun as shooting them yourself. Maybe not quite, but almost...

Rick Jorgenson